With regard to Agricultural Boards there are two gentlemen now who are agriculturists on the Economic Development Board.

Member.—They have some interest in agriculture, no doubt.

Dewan.—The Economic Development Board can be further strengthened, if necessary. But there is no use in multiplying these Boards. The existing Board must be made more useful. The suggestion to make the representation of agriculture more effective will be considered.

45. Agricultural improvements of the State with special reference to the Kottarakara taluk.

Mr. C. P. Kochukunju Pillai (Member, Kottarakara Taluk) first referred to the important part agriculture plays in the economy of the State. He then dwelt at length on the various kinds of cultivation as they stood at present and suggested what could be done by the State to improve them. Taking paddy cultivation, the Member said that rice formed the staple food of the country and for the last 5 years the State had been importing on an average 51 lakhs of rupees worth of paddy and 106 lakhs of rupees worth of rice, and that Government had so far done very little to increase local production. Though the area of arable lands was almost stationary, population was on the increase, and the tendency of the present day was to reduce even the existing area available for paddy cultivation, by converting it into cocoanut gardens or, what was worse, into house sites as was the case in big towns.

There was also the sub-division of holdings which was being effected to a far more minute degree than was desirable in the interests of available cultivation. The conversion of paddy lands into house-sites should be checked through the intervention of Municipal Councils. With a view to increase the available area, a system of well irrigation should be introduced, and steps should be taken to raise water to higher levels by means of gasoline engines. The Government should order a survey of the lands fit for paddy cultivation and induce people to convert them into paddy fields. The Agricultural Engineer whose appointment was in contemplation should be asked to make an investigation in one or two Divisions for irrigation, well-sinking and drainage. Paddy cultivation might also be extended by throwing open the large tracts of wet land now included in reserves. What are called *karikkone* lands which people formerly used to cultivate with paddy should also be similarly thrown open. Government should further help the people with more liberal loans of money, machinery and manure for the yearly cultivation of the *punja* lands in Kuttanad. By these steps the production of rice could be considerably increased in the country.

The Member then made the following suggestions for increasing the output of agricultural produce :—

(1) Cheap and improved implements of agriculture should be supplied to the people through the Agricultural Department which should be liberally financed for the purpose ; the village carpenter and the village blacksmith should be taught to make and sell better and cheaper kinds of plough.

(2) Facilities should be afforded to the ryots to get green manure from the forests and seeds should be distributed free to the ryots to raise manure crops. Pasture lands should not be assigned away for cultivation ; and where there were no such lands, provision should be made for some.

(3) Loans of money should be advanced to purchase seeds and other agricultural requisites.

The Member next referred to irrigation and said that the storage of water in tanks in areas fed by the monsoon was one of the wisest methods for increasing the productivity of the land, but to the misfortune of the country, a policy was adopted in recent years of disposing of tank beds and what were known as *talachiras*. It was very necessary that these *chiras* and *chals* should be restored to their original condition, and repairs to all main channels and culverts should be promptly attended to.

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The Member then alluded to the complaints of the people in regard to the distribution of water from the Kodayar channels and suggested that the letting out and distribution of water should be done in consultation with the Agricultural Department. At present whenever the ryots had to put up temporary bunds across rivers and *thodus* to raise the level of the water for irrigation, they could be prosecuted by the Tahsildar on the ground that they were *porambokes*. With a view to remedy the evil, he urged that the minor and petty irrigation works in each taluk might be entrusted to the Tahsildar of the taluk in the interests of the ryots. He next dwelt on the necessity of developing the production of other food crops like wheat, potatoes, fruits, etc., and insisted on the need for establishing an Agricultural School at Kottarakara.

Lastly, the Member urged the following special needs of the Kottarakara taluk :—

(*a*) investigation of suitable crops for the large extent of waste lands in Kottarakara, which now remained uncultivated ;

(*b*) the construction of a dam across the Pulaman *thodu* ; and

(*c*) the opening of the following roads:—

(1) a road from Kundara to Puyappalli market in Veliyam *pakuthi*,

(2) another road from Vilayara to the Main Central road, and

(3) the construction of the sanctioned road from Kundara to Yenati.

Dewan's reply.—Most of the points have been answered by me already in reply to other members. I realise the importance of pump irrigation. That is why I said that an Engineer should be trained. He should also receive training in pump irrigation. I have already referred to the efforts that are being made for tackling the question of throwing open swamps within forest reserves for cultivation. I am not sure whether hill cultivation is not wasteful, and whether it is not detrimental to the forests. It is a matter on which expert advice and experience of other places will have to be considered. The Member next spoke about facilities for cultivation in Kuttanad. The Director has already told you that improved ploughs are being manufactured and sold at half-price. Orders are also issuing for a blacksmith maistry being entertained in the Alwaye School, and he will be asked to turn out those ploughs and sell them to the public.

In regard to green manure seed Depôts, a green manure depôt will be opened at once in South Travancore, the idea being that South Travancore is the part of the country where green leaf is most wanted. In other parts, people should be allowed to get into the forests and remove the leaves.

Member.—We are not allowed.

Dewan.—I will take up that question.

The Member has next referred to a very important matter which came to my notice during my tour in the Nedumangad taluk, *i. e.*, head *chiras*. Most of them, I am sorry to find, have already been registered. This is a great mistake. I shall issue orders to the effect that these head *chiras* should never be registered. They should be reserved as *porambokes*. The springs in the *chiras* should in no way be interfered with, so that they may continue to replenish the water supply.

In regard to putting up temporary bunds across rivers or canals, I think that the Member is wrong in saying that people require the previous sanction of the Tahsildar. No previous sanction is required for such customary bunding and Tahsildars will be wrong if they treat such cases as encroachments and start *poramboke* proceedings. If they do so, you should take specific instances to the notice of the higher authorities and get a remedy. Irrigation Boards would go a great way towards removing all these obstacles.

With regard to wheat and potato, I am not sure whether the climatic conditions would admit of the cultivation of these crops in this country. That is a matter which the Director of Agriculture must consider.

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I have already pressed on the attention of the Director the question of fruit culture. He wants a fruit farm to be started at once in South Travancore and I am pressing him to open a farm in Central Travancore also, somewhere near Kottarakara. You have a very large extent of land available for cultivation on which graft mango, etc., can be raised. They are not grown, because it is said that rainfall is prejudicial to the growth of good varieties. But I know that in South Canara, in Bombay and on the Goa coast where the rainfall is heavier, they produce mango which is very good in quality and commands very good prices in the Bombay market. Recently I found at Trichur a very good variety of mangoes. I have drawn the attention of the Director to this matter and he is investigating its possibility.

In regard to scholarships, the boys who are coming to join the Agricultural school will not only get free instruction, but will also get stipends. In regard to lessons on agriculture, the view is now accepted more or less by every one that mere lessons without demonstration are of no use.

You will see from all that I have said that the charge that Government have not taken up seriously the question of pushing agriculture is not justifiable.

46. Agricultural needs of the Shencottah Taluk.

Mr. S. Subrahmanya Karayalar B. A. (Member, Shencottah Taluk) began by saying that *Kozhinja* could not be successfully cultivated in Travancore and represented that the Shencottah taluk is mainly agricultural like Nanjinad, but that it now stood in the same position as Nanjanad prior to the Kodayar Project. For want of adequate supply of water, the ryots were not ensured a successful harvest, while the rain water in the taluk flowed to the neighbouring British Indian villages for want of tanks of sufficient capacity to store it. After repeated representations, the Government sanctioned the restoration of the tanks, but the work done in several of the tanks was of no use as the storage capacity had not been increased. The Member suggested that new reservoirs should be constructed at Puliyara, Karkudi and the town of Shencottah, or the courses of some of the rivers should be diverted such as the Palaruvi, or Muripanchan or the Achankoil river or the Eattapadappu river. The Member understood that the Government had issued orders to the P. W. D. to survey some of the rivers, but he was not aware in what stage the survey stood. He, therefore, requested Government to bestow their serious and sympathetic consideration on the matter and help the people of Shencottah with a sufficient supply of water for purposes of cultivation. He added that the ryots would be prepared to meet the cost half way.

The Member then pointed out the necessity of improving and increasing the means of communication in the taluk with a view to the development of agriculture, and he suggested the construction of the following roads:—

(1) the construction of a road from Munnuvaikal up to Karkudi;

(2) the conversion of the Kalangatakaudi channel bund into a cartable road; and

(3) the improvement and conversion of the road from Puliyara up to the Ariankavu Railway tunnel.

He also suggested:—

(*a*) that the road from Puthur up to the Agricultural Farm at Mulakarachanparamettu should be put in thorough order with a bridge over the river on that side of Puthur;

(*b*) the road from Karkudi up to Niliamman Koil should be improved;

(*c*) the road from Elattur to Achanputur should be improved;

(*d*) the road from Aykudi to Martandapuram should be converted into a cartable road with bridges over the rivers between Ayikudi and Kilankad and Kilankad and Martandapuram; and

(*e*) that a road should be constructed from Samburvadakarai to Malukkankulam.

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